

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Champion Fiberglass Inc

Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center

Champion Fiberglass 'Makes' The Mold For The Industry

Client Profile:

Champion Fiberglass, Inc. is a leading supplier of fiberglass conduit for the electrical market. The company's headquarters and main manufacturing plant are located in Spring, Texas, with a pultrusion manufacturing plant in Georgetown, Ontario, Canada that manufactures fiberglass cable tray. Champion Fiberglass started production of epoxy fiberglass conduits and fittings in 1988 as a corrosion resistant and more durable alternative to PVC conduit. Using rapid winding equipment, high temperature curing ovens and an efficient work force of less than 50 people, the company manufactures exceptional quality fiberglass products in accordance with ISO 9000 standards.

Situation:

Champion Fiberglass decided to introduce a new product complimentary to its current conduit product line to keep its leading competitive edge and increase market penetration. The company wanted to develop conduit bodies to complete its line of fiberglass conduit. However, it lacked adequate experience manufacturing parts using a fiberglass-molding compound. For guidance, Champion Fiberglass turned to the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC), a NIST MEP network affiliate.

Solution:

TMAC worked with Champion Fiberglass to develop a new molding compound process by investigating and recommending specific actions in various areas. These areas included mold material and design, part performance development, and the design and execution of various experiments to test the manufacturing process. TMAC also assisted with mold maintenance and press design. Using a completely new molding process, Champion Fiberglass now makes its own molds and custom manufactures directly to customer specifications. The new process has expanded the existing fiberglass conduit market by five times, opening a new niche for Champion Fiberglass. As a result of TMAC's efforts, Champion Fiberglass was not only able to avoid potential layoffs but also hired two new people and met its goal of increased sales. The company anticipates increasing market penetration by 5 percent by adding many new customers, including Bayer and Monsanto. Due to a steady increase in product demand, Champion Fiberglass is again utilizing the manufacturing expertise of the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center to develop a formal quality system in preparation for ISO 9000 registration.

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Results:

Developed a new molding process.
Expanded market five times by opening a new niche.
Created two new jobs and retained all existing employees.
Increased sales.
Anticipating a market penetration growth of five percent.
Added to customer base.
Preparing for ISO 9000 certification.

Testimonial:

"We now have about thirty different molds and can produce over 1,000 parts per week. The Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center helped us achieve the missing link to our product line."

Goran Haag, President